

## EDITORIAL

This issue completes the first volume of the revived *KUKILA*, and we should take stock of our progress. It is not easy to launch a new scientific bulletin on faith and goodwill, but the driving force is the need for such a bulletin in Indonesia, we are pleased that we have succeeded in producing four issues within the first twelve months, but with the movements and contractual realities of personnel, we cannot always guarantee a regular quarterly issue. As a precaution, subscription rates are based on number of issues rather than an annual rate.

First and foremost, the editors would like to thank our sponsors and assistants. The leading sponsor is Dr. Linus Simanjuntak, chief editor of *Voice of Nature*, the monthly journal of the Non-Governmental Organization - Yayasan Indonesia Hijau (Y.I.H.), or in English, Green Indonesia Foundation. *KUKILA* has been possible only through the financial assistance of Y.I.H. and its own benefactors. Eventually *KUKILA* must pay its own way, and while the stream of subscriptions is quite steady, it is still too slow to be satisfactory. We urgently need more subscribers.

Secondly we wish to thank Mrs. corrie Pattinassarany who has so willingly at ended to the hard work of supervising the printers and preparing the mounts, together with M. Indradjit. Finally we are grateful for the assistance of Paul Andrew and David Bishop who, among others, assist in monitoring the technical content of manuscripts.

All of the papers in this volume have been written by foreigners, which symbolizes the state of ornithology in Indonesia. There are very, very few Indonesian ornithologists, and a second aim of *KUKILA* and indeed of YIH is to give encouragement to the development of this hobby. We look forward to publishing papers by Indonesians in the future, and will gladly assist with any language problems. We also hope to include a short summary of each paper in the Indonesian language.

Indonesia is a country in transition, and the development progress over the past two decades has been impressive. How does this relate to ornithology? Perhaps the best ornithologists in the country are the forest dwellers of, say, Kalimantan or Irian Jaya. Of all the labourers who have worked for me on soil surveys in SE Asia or elsewhere, none appreciated my interest in birds more than the Ibans (Sea Dayaks) in Brunei. As a newcomer to the region, they would put names to the calls I heard, and so guide me to their identification in Smythies' handbook. They gave the name "tocktor" to one call, and later confirmed it with a Ground Cuckoo *Carpococcyx rodiceus* which they trapped and cooked (the first record for Brunei). However such knowledge, steeped in tribal culture, is a dying art.

At the other end of the spectrum is a keen interest in cage birds among many who can afford them in Jakarta and elsewhere. Even quite humble homes may have a bulbul hanging in a tiny cage in front of the house. Some of the rare and expensive birds receive the same care and attention as they would receive in the best zoos. While neither condoning nor condemning this, we should take care to distinguish between cage and caged birds. Birds trapped in the wild and kept in tiny cages rarely survive long. Hopefully there will be a captive breeding programe for the Ball Mynah *Leucopsar rothschildi*, now reduced in the wild to about 150 in a small

part of Bali; but will there be a programme for the Straw-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus zeylanicus*? This bulbul is a favourite because of its song, and is expensive. We would guess that there are more kept in cages than there are in the wild in the whole of Java. It is an endangered species in Java, we must ensure it does not become one in Sumatra and Kalimantan as well.

We see that Indonesians love birds, and want to hear, near their homes, the songs they can no longer hear in nature. But this is self-defeating, as the scarcity value increases for the more popular birds. However, the country is in transition. A new awareness of the importance of the natural surroundings is growing, and all support should be given through such bodies as YIH to foster and to educate. The transition could include a new interest in the study of birds in the wild among the younger generation. If *KUKILA* can play a small part in this process, another of our objectives will be fulfilled. Please give us your support, by renewing your subscriptions and encouraging new subscribers.

### THE BIRDS OF BERBAK GAME RESERVE, JAMBI PROVINCE, SUMATRA.

by Marcel J. Silvius and Wirn J.M. Verheugt.

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#### *Introduction.*

The Berbak Game Reserve (104°20'E, 1 ° 10'S) was established on 29 Oct 1935. As presently constituted it covers 190,000 ha, bounded by the S. Berbak in the north (a distributary of the Batang Hari river), S. Benu in the south and the coast in the east (see Fig. 1). It forms part of the vast coastal plain of eastern Sumatra. The reserve is flat and swampy, reaching an elevation of 15 metres AMSL in the west. Extensive peats have formed over the coastal sediments, reaching a depth of over 10 metres. Peat swamp forest covers 110,000 ha. Freshwater swamp forest covers the remainder, merging into riverine forest along the rivers, and mangrove and dry beach forests along the coasts. Some sandy beach ridges are a feature of this part of the coast. The smaller rivers are principally peat drains.

A description of the ecology of the reserve is given in Silvius et al. (1984). Figure 1 shows a zone of cleared land near the coast, which was reclaimed in the 1960's. Six villages are located in the reserve, the population living from rice, coconuts and off-shore fishing. Part of the disturbed area was burnt by two forest fires, which occurred during the droughts of 1972 and 1982-83.

Until 1982 the avifauna of Berbak was virtually unknown. Endert (1936) visited the area in 1935, and his report included some brief notes on its avifauna. A provisional checklist covering 105 species was published in the Berbak Management Plan (de Wulf & Rauf 1982). In 1983 a survey was carried out of the soils, vegetation, fauna and conservation aspects of the reserve (Silvius et al. 1984). Field work took place during April June and Sept.- Nov. 1983. Data on birds were collected only incidentally to the main task, by Silvius in April June and by Silvius and Verheugt in Sept. Nov. During Oct. Nov. 1984 the authors again visited the reserve's coastal area for a period of two weeks, including Tanjung Jabung, a promontory with wide mudflats north of the reserve. The 1984 visit was part of an ICBP - sponsored waterbird survey of the south-east coast of Sumatra (Silvius et al. 1985).

*The checklist*